SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Mr. Ramdas agarwal was apprehensive of the reported news item which says that the Government is thinking of investing pension funds in equity. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I have to go by the translation. ...*(Interruptions)*... I was responding to what I heard... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: I suppose it is your own translation. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I heard it in the translation. I said that there are various views. ...*(Interruptions)*... I understand your views now. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let me speak; it willl be easier...*(Interruption)*.... I understand your views now. ...*(Interruptions)*.. I do not want to repeat in again and again ...*(Interruptions)*... I heard it in the translation. I understand your views now. These are matters which are being considered. Nothing will be done without consulting the trustees of the Provident Fund. What is the alarm? Suggestions will be there; people will write; people make suggestions and we look into all these suggestions. But as I said, our first commitment is to ensure that the employees' funds get higher and secured returns and and that the security of the funds is maintained.

*366. *[The questioner (Dr. Mohan Babu) was absent. For answer vide Col. 29 infra].*

Pay-Parity between programme staff and engineering staff of AIR and DD

*367. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI:†
SHR JOY NADUKKARA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Programme Staff Association of All India Radio and Doordarshan had demanded for maintaining time-testing pay-parity between the programme staff and engineers;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Ministry had recently raised the pay scales of engineering staff while there was no similar revision for programme staff;

(c) whether the Fifth Pay Commission in a letter to the Ministry indicated that it has no intention of reopening past cases or in making rectification of anomalies with retrospective effect; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government to remove the said anomalies?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The matter has already been taken up with the Ministry of Finance.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Sir, he has learnt only to say 'Yes, Sir', 'Yes, Sir', 'Yes, Sir'.

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Sir, they must appreciate me that whatever they have said, I have accepted. I have not said, 'No, Sir'.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: They are only 'yes ministers' and not public servants....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Yes, for a common man, I am a 'yes minister'; for a poor man, I am a 'yes minister'.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please.... *(Interruptions)*.... Now, the first supplementary, Shri Muthu Mani....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Sir, I am sorry that could not go through the answer because I have come late. Sir, my colleague may put the supplementaries.

SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Sir, parts 'a', 'b' and 'c' of the answer say....*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is asking a supplementary.....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI JOY NADDUKKARA: Sir, the Government is admitting in a way its failure to do justice to the programme personnel.....*(Interruptions)*....Sir, if the Government is admitting its mistake, then why can it not correct the mistake? It was in 1994-95 that the pay scales of the technical staff were raised without raising the scales of the programme personnel. Why does the Government not correct it? Sir, if the revision was a result of a court verdict, then I would like to know whether there was any direction

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Joy nadukkara.

that revision must not be done in the case of programme staff.

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Sir, the hon. Member has correctly pointed out that on the judgement of the Supreme Court this has been done. When the programme staff started asking for it, immediately the Ministry took action.

We requested the Pay Commission. We referred it to them. The Pay Commission again said, 'We cannot re-examine the old thing'. Then, I took up the case personally; I wrote to the hon. Finance Minister. Sir, through you, I assure this House that we are considering the anomalies that happened to the programme staff. As head of the organisation, I consider all the *Karmacharies* of my department as my family members. Yes, the Ministry has realised it. I hope the Member would appreciate the steps which we have taken.... (*Interruptions*)....We never said we would not want to go into it because as the decision came from the Supreme Court. We also never advised that they could also go to Supreme Court. Once the Supreme Court gave an order to a section, the Engineering Section, we felt it necessary that the programme staff should also be given the benefit. Earnestly, my Ministry has taken this step and I assure this House that we will put maximum pressure on the Finance Ministry to accept our proposals...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, let the Finance Minister respond.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: The Finance Minister is one foot away from him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The difference is between the Minister and the Ministry. Shrimati Margaret Alva.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: The hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting has said, 'Yes, Sir', 'Yes, Sir', 'Yes, Sir, to the first four parts. It means, he admits that there is injustice and that anomalies today exist between the two which were at par, the Programme staff and the Engineering staff. Hon. Members are aware that a Pay Commission has already been appointed and we have taken a consistant stand that no change in the pay structure will take place until the Commission submits its report. While the Pay Commission is still at work, implementation of the judgement of the Supreme Court created disparities between the two sections who should be at par and the Pay Commission has said that they will not go into the past anomalies. So, the Finance Ministry has to correct it since one has got the benefit and the other section stands to lose permanently even when the Pay Commission Report comes, because only the present pay structure will be taken into consideration. I would, therefore, request that since they had made the mistake of meddling with the pay structure, it stands to reason that the Finance Ministry must think about both of them, and put both of them at par before the final report is submitted so that whatever benefits come to the new pay structure will become applicable to both the sections. Sir, they have been agitating, they have been on *dharnas*. The Minister simply says that he has written to the Finance Ministry. Sir, since the Finance Minister is here, who had also been a Minister for Personnel and he knows how it can be done or how it can be managed, I request him to take a positive stand and give an assurance to us. I would ask, therefore, whether the Finance Minister will, within the present context, take a final decision and announce it before the Pay Commission Report comes.

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Sir, we never committed any mistake. The only question that arose after the judgement of the Supreme Court was that the judgement was in favour of engineers....(*Interruptions*)....

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The question is addressed to the Finance Minister....(*Interruptions*)....

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Regarding *dharnas* and strikes, I must compliment my staff that on my request they have withdrawn their *dharna*. They know very well that as far as this Ministry is concerned, their grievances are taken care of and we are pressurising with the Finance Ministry. Sir, I hope, I will get a definite and positive result. I must also thank the hon. Member for speaking on my behalf to the Finance Minister.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the hon. Minister knows pretty well the problem of the

cap on external debt. I think the correct approach should be to see what the debt-service ratios are. Debt service, as a proportion to GDP, has been coming down. it was as high was 41% in 1991-92. But in 1995-96. It came down to 29.16% that is by 12 percentage points. That, I would say, is a fairly good record. We should also take into account the ratio of debt-service payments. There again, it was 35.25% in 1990-91 and it has come down to 26% in 1995-96. It is projected to be around 26% in 1996-97 also. We should ideally bring down these ratios and these will come down provided we manage our economy well. I think if we continue on the track on which we are today, we will be able to bring down these ratios further.

SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: In view of the possiblility of putting a cap on external debt being remote and in view of the Government of India being pressed to invite foreign direct investment, which would be in the region of ten billion dollars per year, would the Finance Minister also consider another possibility of reducing imports specially of those consumption goods for which sufficient production facility is available with the Indian industry? According to my view, every import costs a job in this country and that is why my request or suggestion to the hon. Finance Minister is to consider capping import of at least those consumption goods for which sufficient production capacity is available in the country, even though it may have some problem with the WTO to which we are a signatory.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It the hon. Member's suggestion is that we should introduce quantitative restrictions on imports that is not possible.

We have to move towards tariffication. We are moving towards a tariff-based import regime. We are signatories to the WTO. The whole world has accepted the principle that trade policy must be based on tariffs rather than QRs. We cannot be an exception. We ought not be an exception. We can consider suitable tariffs for luxury items. We have such tariffs. For consumer goods, the tariff today is 50 per cent plus, of course, additional Customs Duties which is countervailing duty. That is enough protection for domestic industry. But if the hon. Member goes further and says that you use QRs. as an instrument for stopping imports, I am afraid, that is not in tune with sound economic policy nor is it in tune with the obligations under WTO.

मौलाना ओबैदुल्ला खान आज़मी: शुक्रिया सर। मेरे सवाल के जवाब में यह कहा गया है कि जो विदेशी कर्ज हमारे देश के ऊपर है, उस पर श्वेत-पत्र जारी करने के लिए सरकार गौर कर रही है। सर, साथ ही साथ मैंने यह पूछा था कि यह काम कब तक हो जायेगा, तो उसका जवाब नहीं दिया गया। यह कहा गया है कि चालू वित्त वर्ष में कर देंगे, तो क्या मंत्री जी महीना और तारीख बताने की मेहरबानी करेंगे? जैसे इस बात को पहली सरकार बार-बार टालती रही है तो क्या मंत्री जी पार्लियामेंट को यह यकीन दिलायेंगे कि इस मामले को आगे नहीं टाला जायेगा?

†[مولانا عبید اللہ خاں اعظمی: شکریہ سر۔ میرے سوال کے جواب میں یہ کہا گیا ہے کہ جو ودیشی قرض ہمارے دیش کے اوپر ہے۔ اس پر "شویت پتر" جاری کرنے کے لئے سرکار غور کر رہی ہے۔ سر ساتھ ہی ساتھ میں نے یہ پوچھا تھا کہ یہ کام کب تک ہو جائے گا۔ تو اس کا جواب نہیں دیا گیا۔ یہ کہا گیا ہے کہ چالو وت ورش میں کر دینگے۔ تو کیا منتری جی مہینہ اور تاریخ بتانے کی مہربانی کرینگے۔ جیسے اس بات کو پہلی سرکار بار بار ٹالتی رہی ہے تو کیا منتری جی پارلیمنٹ کو یہ یقین دلائیں گے کہ اس معاملے کو آگے نہیں ٹالا جائیگا]†

†[ ] Transliteration in Arabic Script

programme executives in All India Radio and Doordarshan. They want parity of pay with the engineering staff. The Minister is also aware that the programme executives are doing all the work there; the engineering staff work under them. But now the engineering staff are getting a higher scale of pay than the programme executives even though the engineering staff are working under the control of the programme executives. Therefore, this anomaly has arisen. The judgement of the Supreme Court has changed the situation.

The hon. Minister had a discussion with them and arrived at a three-point agreement. The minutes have been recorded. One of the main points was that he would refer the matter to the hon. Finance Minister for the purpose of giving them a scale of pay on par with that of the engineerng staff in order to remove the anomaly.

The hon. Minister had also given an assurance to them that by the end of September, he would set right the anomaly. Now, Sir, the programme executives have started an agitation and it is going on. After the Minister gave them the assurance, they were keeping quiet for some time.

I would like to know by which time the Government is going to decide this particular matter. The hon. Minister is passing on the buck to the Finance Minister. But the Finance Minister is keeping quiet. I would like to know as to when they are going to take a decision and rectify this anomaly which is existing in the two scales of pay. A decision should be taken soon because when the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission come, there would be further problems. That is why I would like to know as to when they are going to decide.

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Sir, after the reply from the Pay Commission, I wrote to the Finance Ministry. I hope, as early as possible, I would get....(*Interruptions*).....

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: No, no. (*Interruptions*) You should indicate a time-frame.

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: From my side, there would not be any delay.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the Finance Minister is sitting by his side. He can respond. (*Interruptions*). The Finance Minister is sitting there. (*Interruptions*). This is an anomaly which has been accepted by the Government. The Government has accepted it. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not fair to ask the Finance Minister to answer. The question had not been put to him.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: That is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jalaludin Ansari.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The Information and Broadcasting Minister passed on the buck to the Finance Minister. That is why we are asking him.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: The problem of the programme executives cannot be solved like that.

श्री जलालुद्दीन अंसारी: यह मामला पांचवे वेतन आयोग के निर्देश को भी जो अनियमितताएं दूर करने का था। अभी पांचवें वेतन आयोग के निर्देश का भी पालन नही किया गया। इंजीनियरिंग स्टाफ को दे दिया गया और प्रोग्राम स्टाफ को नहीं दिया गया। यह कहते हैं कि वित्त मंत्रालय उनको देखेगा। वित्त मंत्रालय हो या यह मंत्रालय हो, इस विसंगति को दूर करने के लिए इनको कोई रास्ता निकालने की जरूरत है, नहीं तो पांचवें वेतन आयोग की रिपोर्ट के बाद और भी समस्या खड़ी हो जाएगी। इसलिए हम जानना चाहेंगे कि इस संबंध में सरकार विसंगति को दूर करने और समानता प्रदान करने के बजाय यह तो और विसंगति खड़ी कर रहे है, इस संबंध में उनका क्या उपाय है यह सदन को बताएं।

†اشری جلال الدین انصاری: یہ معاملہ پانچویں ویتن آیوگ کے نردیش کو بھی جو انیامتائیں دور کرنے کا تھا۔ ابھی پانچویں ویتن آیوگ کے نردیش کا بھی پالن نہیں کیا گیا۔ انجینئرنگ اسٹاف کو دے دیا گیا اور پروگرام اسٹاف کو نہیں دیا گیا یہ کہتے ہیں

†[ ] Transliteration in Arabic Script

کہ وٹ منترالیہ انکو دیکھے گا۔ وٹ منترالیہ ہو یا یہ منترالیہ ہو۔ اس وسنگتی کو دور کرنے کے لئے انکو کوئی راستہ نکالنے کی ضرورت ہے۔ نہیں تو پانچویں ویں آیوگ کی رپورٹ کے بعد اور بھی سمسیا کھڑی ہو جائے گی۔ اس لئے ہم جاننا چاہیں گے کہ اس سمبندھ میں سرکار وسنگتی کو دور کرنے اور سمانتا پورن کرنے کے بجائے یہ تو اور وسنگتی کھڑی کر رہے ہیں۔ اس سمبندھ میں ان کا کیا اپائے ہے یہ سدن کو بتائیں۔]

श्री सी॰ एम॰ इब्राहिम: मान्यवर, इस देश की जो व्यवस्था है मेरे लिए तो यही एक रास्ता है, सिवाय इसके दूसरा कोई और रास्ता है ही नहीं। जो रास्ता है उस रास्ते में इसकी तीव्र गति को हम बढ़ाए हुए हैं। जब पे-कमीशन ने इससे इंकार किया तो फौरन हमने फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर से रास्ता कायम किया है और मुझे आशा है कि उनसे मिलकर जल्द से जल्द रास्ता निकाला जाएगा।

*368. *[The qustioner (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV was absent. For answer vide col. 30 infra]*

Net Asset Value/Repurchase Price/ Switchover price of mastergain 1992

*369. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be please to state:

(a) the net asset value (n.a.v.) of Mastergain 1992, of UTI, the repurchase price and the switchover price to US 1964 scheme as on the 8th November, 1995;

(b) the number of cases of Mastergain 1992 tendered at the New Delhi office of the UTI for repurchase and switchover to US 1964 indicating separately the value of the shares tendered on 8th November, 1995 and the price on which these shares were repurchased/ switchedover by UTI; and

(c) whether there is any difference between the repurchase/switchover price and that actually allowed to the unit holders who tendered their units on 8th November, 1995, if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SH. P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Net Asset Value, the repurchase price and the switch over price to US-64 for the Mastergain-1992 Scheme of UTI as on 8.11.1995 are indicated below:—

Net Asset Value (NAV)	—	Rs. 13.66
Repurchase Price	—	Rs. 12.09
Switch-over Price	—	Rs. 12.60

(b) Details of cases of Mastergain-1992 tendered at the New Delhi Office for repurchase/switch over as on 8.11.1995 are as follows:—

	No. of Applications	Rate	No. of Units	Amount Rs.
Repurchase	569	12.09	436900	5282121/-
Switch-over to US-64	214	12.60	189800	2391480/-

(c) There is a difference between the repurchase price and the switch-over price as repurchase price is determined at 5% discount and switch over price is determined at 1% discount to the NAV of the following week. The actual prices allowed to the unit holders as on 8.11.1995 are indicated at (b) above.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Sir, much has been heard about this particular Mastergain. Reports go to the extent of saying that these shares are transferred without the requisite authority of the shareholders. This is done with